

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

A249.3
M342G

A G U I D E

F O R

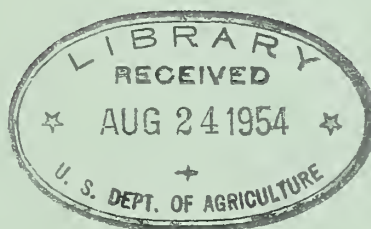
A D M I N I S T R A T O R S . A N D S U P E R V I S O R S

- - -

P E R S O N N E L

D E V E L O P M E N T A N D T R A I N I N G

- - -



Persomel Division
Agricultural Marketing Service
United States Department of Agriculture

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
LIBRARY



BOOK NUMBER A249.3
873629 M342G

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service
Washington, D. C.

872000

A GUIDE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPERVISORY OFFICIALS
IN CARRYING OUT
THE AMS PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING POLICY

I. PURPOSE:

The AMS Personnel Development and Training Policy is expressed in AMS Instruction No. 370-1. It is the purpose of this document to amplify the provisions of that policy and to discuss some of the pertinent aspects relative to its application. It is important that we more specifically identify the job to be done, clarify the place of training in relation to over-all Service objectives, and review the means of accomplishing the job.

II. THE PLACE OF TRAINING IN SERVICE OPERATIONS:

The training of all employees is a major management function. It is a continuing responsibility which is present in every operation. Because of the recency of the organization of AMS the total training job is even greater than during more normal times.

The AMS organization is different than that to which most of us have been accustomed. Functions have been regrouped. Employees have been transferred and assigned to new jobs. They work in new locations with new supervisors and working associates. Some have been assigned administrative and supervisory responsibilities which they did not have before. New and different systems, methods, procedures and practices are in effect.

Each of these circumstances creates the need for becoming familiar with a new set of conditions. In many cases the individuals involved have developed firmly ingrained work habit patterns which substantially add to the difficulties of adjustment.

These employees must be provided with considerable help in order that they may reach an acceptable level of efficiency within a reasonable period of time. They must be trained to do their new work under new circumstances and operating policies. This may be best accomplished by means of well planned, well organized, and efficiently conducted training operations. The training job is of unusual proportions and exceptional importance by reason of the numerous influences created by the reorganization.

Training is the management medium by means of which the individual members of the organization become capable of accomplishing their assigned responsibilities. Employees must be trained to properly

plan their work so that it will be carried on in an orderly manner and will produce results which meet prescribed standards. They must be trained to organize their planned activities either for personal performance or accomplishment by others.

Every member of the Service is charged with training responsibilities which are inherent in the position he occupies regardless of the character or level of that position. First, he must constantly maintain or increase his own capabilities in order that he may most effectively discharge his current responsibilities and in all other respects may render the maximum contribution to the service interests. Secondly, he must take whatever action is necessary to make certain that all subordinates are fully trained for their current jobs. Third, he must identify the career objectives of all subordinates and actively assist in their attainment within the limitations imposed by organizational opportunity and individual capability potential. It is only through complete recognition and acceptance of these training responsibilities that each employee will be able to render full and appropriate contribution to the Service and to the public.

III. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING OBJECTIVES:

The training and development of each member of the organization to the end that individual skills, abilities and capacities are fully realized in meeting all of the requirements of the Service is one of the primary responsibilities of each supervisor. Recognition and acceptance of this responsibility by each employee is necessary for its attainment. This is the initial training job of every employee who is responsible for directing the activities of others. (The presence of the desired attitude will serve as a decided asset in the conduct of all activities. Its absence will represent a disturbing deterrent.)

It is essential that there exists, throughout the Service, a uniform understanding of our goals, of the measures employed to reach them and singleness of purpose in the total undertaking. If there is justified opportunity for substantial variation in interpretation similar variation in modes of operation and in the results achieved are almost inevitable.

Personnel Development refers to the attributes acquired by the individual which enable him to perform his current job more efficiently and which qualify him for assignments of more diversified and responsible character.

The ultimate goal, and each intermediate one, must be clearly identified. They must be decided upon through mutual participation. They must be attainable, in the best judgment of those responsible.

Personnel Training is one of the most effective media in the accomplishment of individual development. The acceptability of results are very largely dependent upon how well the training job is done.

The training function is not limited to any one process or method. No one method will produce acceptable results. It is a combination of circumstances and conditions. Some are formalized and some are not. Many are the result of deliberate and conscious effort and many are spontaneous. In any event, it is imperative that there be complete realization that every employee is being subjected to continuous training.

Personnel training is the result of any type of influence which affects in any form and to any degree, the attitude, proficiency or mode of operation of the individual. Influences may be either good or bad. They may produce desirable qualities which will be of benefit to the employee and to the organization. They may produce undesirable results, which will make the employee less capable of doing a good job and, obviously, of less value to the organization.

Personnel development is the end result and personnel training is the means to that end.

It is clear, then, that all training influences in AMS must point toward the prescribed standards of the Service. Those which do not must be avoided. Any existing deterrent influences must be eliminated.

There is no more effective training influence than the example set by the supervisor. Every subordinate has the right to expect that his supervisor's philosophy and way of doing things represents the pattern he is to follow. Every administrator and supervisor has the responsibility of setting the pattern he expects his subordinates to follow. This is a prime responsibility.

IV. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OPERATING OFFICIALS:

The final responsibility for the development and training of each employee rests with appropriate line officials. This responsibility carries up the line from the first line supervisor to and including the highest ranking administrative official of the organization. This responsibility is delegated, in whole or in part, from the top to the bottom. Appropriate responsibility is always delegated but never transferred.

In redeeming their responsibilities line officials should approach and deal with the problem in an orderly fashion. A fairly uniform pattern is applicable regardless of the particular circumstances which may exist.

First, training needs should be determined. These are dictated by current and potential organizational requirements, the proficiencies and capacities of those making up the organizational unit, and the individual career objectives of the employees involved. This is a continuing function. Frequent modification is necessitated by changes in personnel, in policy, in objectives, in standards, in priorities, in work loads, and by reason of numerous other similar influences. The relative priority of such needs must be decided upon and may have to be changed from time to time.

Second, definite plans must be developed to accomplish the training for which the need has been determined. This will involve the determination of the methods to employ, the selection of those to receive the training and those who will be responsible for carrying on certain specified phases. Facilities required must be identified and provided for. Answers must be provided to - who, what, where, when, and how.

Third, the training activity decided upon must be carried out. The line official who is responsible will need to check on progress with appropriate frequency. He must make certain that the agreed upon plan is being followed, that such plans are modified whenever dictated by developments. (He will want to see to it that effort is directed toward the current objective and that no trivial or imagined deterrents are allowed to exert disruptive influences.)

Fourth, the results must be evaluated. Frequently, the skills and other attributes acquired in a positive training effort are not fully utilized. This is usually due to failure of application. Such failure is sometimes attributable to lack of support or direction by responsible administrative officials. The trainee has learned and is usually desirous and capable of utilizing his acquisition. Too frequently his supervisor does not display the interest or furnish the encouragement necessary to make certain that the organization derives full benefit. Such situations are positive indications of administrative weaknesses. The major deterring influence is not in the loss of accomplishment through failure to fully utilize the individual's ability. It is in the demoralizing effect upon the principal and his co-workers. Careful evaluation and follow-up has many advantages. In addition to those that are obvious, the responsible line officer is able to effect improvement in similar training activities carried on in the future.

These personnel development and training responsibilities of operating officials in AMS apply particularly to the following specific major areas.

A. Administration and Supervision:

The function of supervision is present to some degree at every administrative level. The job of the full-time first line supervisor is almost entirely supervisory. He devotes nearly all of his time to the immediate direction of his subordinates.

At the next higher level, the responsible officer devotes a little less time to direct supervision. He spends a little more time on planning of work, setting priorities and the other management functions.

This same condition continues up through the organizational structure. The individual at the top devotes a minimum of time to direct supervision but considerable to the other management functions such as planning, organizing, staffing, coordinating and budgeting. While the volume of supervisory responsibility lessens in going from bottom to top, the importance of quality of supervision increases.

The standard of administration and supervision in AMS dictates the efficiency of the Service. Constant improvement in the management fields represents one of our most important continuing jobs.

B. "Subsidiary" Management Areas:

The more specific areas of work planning, organization of work operations, selecting personnel, coordination of operations, communications, and several others, are important components of the total management job.

It is seldom that all of them are handled with equal effectiveness. It is the job of each AMS line officer to give attention to each of these areas in proportion to the need for improvement.

Each segment of AMS should carry out a well-planned and effective orientation program. It is important that new employees develop the proper attitude right from the start and get into efficient operation as early as practicable.

AMS line officials have a real responsibility in training subordinate administrators and supervisors in the numerous aspects of their individual assignments. The fact that an employee is occupying a high level position is no assurance, in itself, that he knows how, or actually is, operating as he should. Management employees need considerable help, considerable training, in order to function at the standards of efficiency prescribed for the Service. They need to be able to organize their work and their people, to plan their operations effectively, and to direct the activities for which they are responsible in such a way that the end objective is achieved through concerted and harmonious effort. It is not sufficient that we know how to do these things. We must be able to put them into practice.

C. Skills Required in Individual Jobs:

Employees may enter the service with little knowledge of, or experience in, the specific tasks they are expected to perform. We may expect them to have the basic qualifications but they may need to be trained in the skills of doing their individual jobs. They must fully understand what the job is, how it fits into the operations of the unit, the Service and the Department. They must learn the methods, procedures, practices, techniques and standards that are applicable to their assignments and be able to apply them.

It is the supervisor's job to see that the required skills are acquired. He can do this only through some form of training. The better the training job is planned and carried on the better the results and the better the supervisor is doing his job.

D. Career Development of the Individual:

Every employee has certain professional or vocational aspirations. All do not aspire to reach the same ultimate goal. Some want to be the best in their line at a comparatively unimpressive level. Others want to become recognized experts in a scientific field or executives with tremendous organizational responsibilities. Still others want to attain heights which they have identified but vaguely, if at all.

Any employee who is given reasonable opportunity and help in achieving his career ambitions is a more valuable employee. It is the responsibility of the line officer to become familiar with the career objectives of his subordinate. The supervisor should help to identify and clarify and he should explain limitations, possibilities, and

impossibilities. After appropriate consideration of the needs of the Service, the opportunities it offers, and the individual's desires, a plan should be developed and put into operation. It should make definite provision for the training required to attempt to achieve the agreed upon objective. In this field the responsible line official performs an important role.

V. EFFECTIVE TRAINING METHODS AND ESSENTIALS FOR GETTING THE TRAINING JOB DONE

The training methods which should be employed are many and varied. It is seldom that one method alone will accomplish the job. Obviously, too many methods employed concurrently would serve to detract from the effectiveness of any one. It is usual, however, that several may be utilized at one time to advantage. Identification of the most effective combination is an important feature for consideration by responsible management personnel.

A. Formalized Group Programs or "Courses":

This is a very effective way to develop principles, to impart information, and to develop interest in an area to be dealt with later in more detail. It has, as primary advantages, the opportunity to pool the thinking of a number of employees and to exchange ideas and viewpoints based on individual experience.

It is an excellent coordinating practice which should be freely used. It stimulates competition. In this environment the employee attempts to attain heights which he would not consider in the absence of critical review by work associates. The employee is an active participant. It gives him the opportunity to contribute.

The group "course" method will yield substantial benefit as the initial step in the improvement of administrative and supervisory practices. It is not the total answer but a very effective beginning.

B. The Lecture Method:

It has its place but has very definite limitations. It provides the opportunity to impart information, to state facts. The subject matter presented should be readily subject to uniform interpretation.

There is but little opportunity to determine how much is assimilated or the accuracy of individual interpretation. Neither is there opportunity to determine how effectively the information imparted will be applied.

This method, alone, should seldom be expected to accomplish the total job. It is entirely appropriate as a means of imparting advance information, of preliminary briefing, of explaining the highlights of what is to follow.

C. On-the-Job Training in Skills:

There is no acceptable substitute for this method. It is conducted under actual job conditions. The employee is told and is shown how to do the job. He has the chance to try it himself under the personal guidance of his trainer. During repeated trial the errors he makes are

noted, are brought to his attention right then, and the further instruction he needs is given.

The prime virtue of this method is the opportunity afforded the trainer to give personal attention to the trainee.

D. Understudy:

Under this arrangement the trainee is assigned to work with someone to become familiar with all or certain aspects of the trainer's job. It is the trainee's function to observe, question and through association, acquire knowledge about the operations and the way they are conducted. It is the trainer's responsibility to willingly explain his operations. He furnishes background material, why the operation is carried on and the reasons for the methods, procedures and practices that are followed.

This is a very effective method, if properly administered, as one of the means of qualifying an employee for a particular assignment. It is a practice that should be extensively used to develop replacements for impending retirements and to equip employees for assignment to positions comparable to those occupied by the trainers.

The key to success rests largely in the effectiveness of the trainer. Great care should be exercised in his selection. There must be full awareness that the results could be harmful instead of beneficial.

E. "Staff" Meetings:

A very effective training practice if properly utilized. They must be well planned and conducted. They must have a definite purpose and carried on with that purpose in mind.

Staff meetings provide staff members the opportunity to become familiar with philosophy of their supervisor, to learn how he wants them to operate. The individual members learn of the problems and activities of the others. They are privileged to serve as a member of the team.

Well planned and conducted staff meetings are one of the most effective means of coordinating operations. They should be used exclusively at relatively frequent intervals, to make certain that each member clearly understands his place in the organization and his relationship to all those with whom he has contact.

F. Inspection:

A properly conducted inspection of a single activity, of a group of activities or of general administration of an organizational unit is an extremely effective training medium. To derive the maximum benefit the inspector and the inspectee must recognize the place and

responsibility of each. If the proper attitudes and relationships are not established at the outset considerable will be lost.

The officer who only gathers facts during the course of his inspection is doing only a partial job. (Certain types of audit operations and investigations are of necessity limited to fact finding and reporting. The comments here relate to inspections which are not so limited.) The one responsible for the operation being inspected should look upon the occasion as an opportunity to derive substantial benefit. The inspector must be sincerely desirous of furnishing help and willing to freely discuss any situation that is encountered.

He must realize that his job is to get the full story. To recognize and to report on the work that meets or exceeds the standards, as well as that which is substandard. A poorly qualified inspector is, obviously, to be avoided.

G. Setting the Example:

There is no more potent training influence than the mode of operation of the supervisor in his day-to-day activities." Every official act of every administrator and of every supervisor has a positive effect upon the subordinate's way of doing things.

Beneficial training results from efficient administration and detrimental training results from sub-standard administration. If the supervisor is efficient his subordinates will be efficient. If he is not efficient it is highly probable that the performance of his subordinates will not measure up.

The most important training function of every AMS administrative official is to see to it that high quality administration and supervision exists in his own and in each subordinate level.

VI. THE FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PERSONNEL OFFICE IN THE FIELD OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING:

Personnel technicians operate in a staff relationship to the personnel of all other Divisions. They have no direct authority or responsibility over any employee other than their subordinates within their respective organizational units. They cannot give instructions to other than their immediate subordinates. They are not, in the final analysis, responsible for the development and training of members of other Divisions.

Representatives of the Personnel Office operate in a service capacity. It is their function to furnish help to other members of the AMS organization in order that operating officials may efficiently discharge their assigned duties. Such help may be furnished in a variety of ways. By offering suggestions or advice, investigation of specific problems, the analysis of investigative data, proposing solutions to specific problems, developing program material, demonstrating the application of program material, and by other similar means. The specific type of help desired can, of course, be best determined by those having need for it.

A. Specific Types of Assistance the Personnel Office is Able to Furnish:

1. Improving Administration and Supervision:

It was considered appropriate to direct first attention to this problem by reason of its relative importance.

The Personnel Office has compiled a guide for the use of line officials in developing, organizing, and conducting a program in administrative and supervisory development. The specific subjects dealt with are those representing the areas inherent in the jobs of administration and supervision. Included are: Human Relations, Communications, Organization, Selection of Personnel, Improving Work Methods, Work Planning, Giving Talks and Training of Personnel. It also provides for the testing of supervisory attitudes and abilities of participants and the analysis of test results.

The outline covers every phase of the program, from the very beginning to completion. Samples of most of the required materials are furnished. It is intended as a guide for the use of organizational units in developing and carrying on their own program. The material is sufficiently flexible to permit its adaptation to most any local situation.

This program guide may be obtained upon request.

To the extent that personnel and other limitations will permit, a member of the Personnel Office will, upon request, provide personal assistance, in developing the local program and in the initial stages of execution. The furnishing of such assistance is, of necessity, limited to those areas having large concentrations of AMS employees.

2. Testing and Training Motor Vehicle Operation:

Motor vehicle accident reports indicate that a very high percentage of our accidents result from improper driving practices. Without doubt the number of accidents can be substantially reduced by identifying and training those employees whose operating practices do not meet an acceptable standard.

The Personnel Office contemplates the early development of a driver testing and training program. As soon as this program is developed the details relating to its administration will be furnished.

In areas having large concentrations of employees, the Personnel Office will, upon request, furnish on-the-ground assistance in the inauguration of this program.

3. Conference Organization:

Conferences and all other types of meetings are effective and essential methods of communication. However, they are expensive.

It is an important responsibility of management officials in AMS to make certain that investments in conference operations produce

maximum returns. Adequate preparation pays big dividends. A conference not adequately prepared for, produces adverse effects of far greater consequence than the results, or lack of results, of that particular meeting. The efficiency with which conferences are prepared for, organized and conducted is a positive means of measuring the quality of administration in any organizational unit.

The Personnel Office will furnish all possible assistance in this field. Such assistance need not be limited to organization and other preparatory aspects. Subject to the practical restrictions of transportation and limited supply, this office will temporarily lend certain of the unusual equipment items. Also, it may be possible, at times, to suggest sources from which required items may be procured. Operating offices should not hesitate to request these services.

4. Development of Training Plans to Meet Specific Needs:

Operating deficiencies, regardless of their nature, dictate the need for attention and usually call for some form of training as a corrective measure. Low morale, substandard quality of work, low production, "overworked" attitude, poor superior-subordinate relationships, lack of interest in work, excessive number of grievance or "problem" cases are just a few of the deficiency indicators.

Each such situation, or any similar one, calls for action on the part of the responsible line official. Sometimes the cause of the difficulty can be easily identified. Sometimes it cannot. Sometimes the proper remedy is evident and at other times it is not. Not infrequently an "outsider," someone not intimately associated with the situation, can be of real help in identifying the cause and proposing the remedy.

The Personnel Office is responsible for providing all possible assistance in matters of this type. Frequently, suggestions and advice can be supplied through exchange of correspondence. When this is impracticable or when justified by the magnitude or seriousness of the circumstances, personal contact by a Personnel Office representative will be arranged for.

Particularly in connection with the more specialized types of training activity, operating units may desire assistance in the determination of the methods, techniques, and practices which will prove most effective. The Personnel Office will arrange to supply all possible aid when assistance of this character is desired.

5. Services Relating to Individual Development and Specialized Programs:

The Personnel Office frequently obtains information relating to available educational and training facilities and opportunities which may be of interest to individual employees. The privilege to participate is in some instances on a competitive basis. In others, the decision rests solely with the individual. College scholarships and intern programs sponsored by the Civil Service Commission are examples of the competitive type. Resident and correspondence courses offered by educational institutions and management programs, usually offered by private service organizations on a fee basis,

are examples of the non-competitive type. We will currently supply information of this character to operating offices.

The Personnel Office maintains a limited supply of publications relating to the general management field and to specialized subject matter within that general field. Such material originates within Agriculture, in other Governmental agencies, in industry and in other similar areas. Some of these publications are available at no cost while others must be paid for. To the extent practicable, copies of such material will be furnished or information will be supplied as to its availability and source from which obtainable.

The Personnel Office will periodically furnish information concerning motion pictures, film strips and other similar aids. To the extent practicable, data relative to sources, availability, cost and appraisal of effectiveness will be supplied.

Requests for reference material and information of this character will be handled as expeditiously as possible. Operating offices should not hesitate to request assistance in procuring similar materials, even though availability is unknown. Costs for materials which cannot be furnished without charge must be borne by receiving offices.

6. The assistance the Personnel Office may be able to furnish is not necessarily limited to the specific items enumerated above. AMS offices should freely request the services of the Personnel Office in relation to any matters pertaining to the general field of personnel development and training.

